

Proclamation 7120 of September 12, 1998

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Week, 1998

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

We have many weapons at hand in our war against cancer, and among the most effective is early diagnosis. With ovarian cancer in particular—sometimes called the “silent killer” because it shows no obvious signs or symptoms until late in its development—early diagnosis can mean the difference between life and death. Of the estimated 26,000 American women who were diagnosed with ovarian cancer last year, an estimated 14,000 died. Currently, almost 70 percent of women with ovarian cancer are not diagnosed until the disease is in its advanced stages; in many cases, the cancer has already spread by the time it is discovered.

We know relatively little about why some women develop this deadly disease. While every woman is at risk, we do know that ovarian cancer occurs somewhat more frequently in women who have never been pregnant. Women who have had breast cancer or who have a family history of breast or ovarian cancer are also at increased risk. There are other genetic factors as well that can affect the incidence of ovarian cancer.

We do have hope in our fight against this cancer. Scientists at medical centers and hospitals across our Nation are developing significant new information that holds promise for the future, particularly for research in genetic susceptibility and prevention, diagnostic imaging, screening and diagnosis, and treatment. For example, because of their knowledge about the ovarian cancer risk genes, researchers are now able to work on developing prevention and screening with women in families at high risk. Researchers are also making progress in the area of treatment through improvements in existing chemotherapy regimens.

While we take heart from these promising developments, we also recognize the need for an increased awareness and understanding of ovarian cancer. As we observe Ovarian Cancer Awareness Week and affirm our national commitment to fighting this devastating disease, I encourage all American women and their families to learn more about ovarian cancer, and I urge health care professionals to emphasize to their patients the importance of regular examinations. By doing so, we can build on the progress we have made in our crusade against cancer and ensure healthier, longer lives for women.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 13 through September 19, 1998, as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Week. I encourage the American people to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON